

Great minds think alike

By Master Sgt. Rick Burnham  
Air Force Print News

Washington D.C. – The recent decision by the National Archives and Records Administration to remove the original Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and the Constitution from public display because of a renovation project really hit home with me. A new resident of the national capital region, I had listed that location as a “must see” during my tour at the Pentagon, along with the Washington Monument and the Jefferson Memorial.

To the average American, these documents provide a glimpse of the brilliance our forefathers demonstrated in laying the blueprint for our country. That we have become, in a relatively short period of time, the greatest nation in the history of the Earth only serves to validate that brilliance.

But to the bluesuiter, those of us who defend the words of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, these documents say so much more. They outline not only the duties and responsibilities we have as Americans, but also the manner in which they are conducted. They guarantee all the rights and privileges associated with being free men and women, but stress that integrity should be the guide in all we do.

It is unlikely that Jefferson, or Adams, or Franklin could have envisioned a U.S. Air Force of 2001. Stealth technology, air-to-air refueling and the C-17 Globemaster III would have been significant leaps of faith, considering the Wright brothers’ historical flight was still more than a century away.

Still, it is truly amazing how the key concepts of today’s Air Force — our core values — are laced throughout the Declaration, the Bill of Rights and the Constitution. Although you won’t find the words “Integrity First, Service Before Self and Excellence In All We Do” anywhere in them, the ideas behind them are consistently on display in these documents.

Take, for example, the Declaration of Independence. Written by Jefferson over a 17-day period in mid-June 1776, the document includes some of the most famous words ever penned by a human being: “All men are created equal,...endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that

among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness...governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it.”

In other words, so as to not impose upon the rights of their fellow citizens, the men and women empowered to any government office, including the military, should let integrity lead the way. “Integrity first” and always.

In Amendment III to the Constitution, part of the Bill of Rights, our forefathers said, “No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, nor in time of war, but in a manner to be described by law.” Obviously, those of us in uniform should not use our status as members of the militia to obtain special privileges. To do so would very quickly undermine our credibility with the general public. They would doubt our integrity, and think of us as putting self interests before the country’s.

By outlawing this type of activity, our forefathers ensured we place “Service Before Self.”

Another example can be found in Article 1, Section 9 of the Constitution. It states: “No title of nobility shall be granted by the United States, and no person holding any office...shall accept any present, emolument, office or title...from any king, prince, or foreign state.” In other words, we must not use our status as government officials for personal gain.

Together, the Constitution, Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights serve to ensure we live and work in an atmosphere conducive to living our lives to the fullest. Instead of worrying about whether our personal beliefs will be accepted by those in power, we can concentrate on more important things: our families, our careers, and our dreams. Success, accomplishment, “excellence in all we do.”

We can speak our minds without worrying about retribution. We can assemble, and do it with the confidence that we can and will make a difference.

While they couldn’t have imagined it then, their forethought helped shape the greatest Air Force in the world.

An Easy Job

By Capt. John R. Brooks  
8th MDSS Medical Logistics Flight commander

Just this past weekend I was having a not-so-typical conversation with someone unfamiliar about what goes on inside the Wolf Pack gates.

I was asked, “what do you do at Kunsan?” At first I was hesitant...after all, only God knows where she was from, and why she was asking. But finally I decided there would be little harm in answering this rather benign question. So, I simply replied, “I take care of the medical supplies for the hospital on base.” To this, my interrogator remarked, “that’s an easy job!” I was a bit taken back, and put on the defensive. The course I recently finished in difficult conversations might finally come in handy.

How do you respond to someone who tells you that you have an easy job? Do they mean physically easy, not mentally challenging, little responsibility? I was unsure exactly what my interrogator meant. A question back to her seemed appropriate. So, I asked, “What is a hard job?” What followed was a brief explanation of some troops she had met that worked on the flight line. I think I heard her say crew chief. OPSEC...INFOSEC. Hmmmm. She continued with descriptions of the physically demanding and stressful work that goes on to keep our jets in the sky. She made a decent argument.

It may look like I have an easy job – how hard could it be spending three or four hours a day in front of a computer, attending a few meetings each week, and coordinating the supplies, equipment and facilities programs for the 8th Medical Group? From the outside, one can’t help but think our maintainers have a hard job. Just look at the exhaustion on their faces, their dirty uniforms, and scuffed up boots after working to turn sortie after sortie. Civil engineering folks, services, supply, and many others are right in the mix too.

I’ve relived the conversation over and over the past couple days. I have come to only one conclusion: as beauty is in the eye of beholder, perceived job difficulty is too. Do you measure job difficulty in terms of dollars managed? If this is the case, the crew chief and I are pretty close. Last I checked, F-16s were pretty expensive! What about number of troops reporting? I have about 20, but the crew chief can impact an entire city block of people if he fails. Hours on the job? I certainly work my share, but I guarantee every Wolf Pack member does.

I’ve become more and more convinced every cog in the wheel is about equal in terms of importance to the mission. Quite simply, difficulty of one’s job is only relative to what is easy or hard to that specific individual. The next time I’m asked, “what do you do,” I think I’ll say, “Defend the Base, Accept Follow On Forces, Take the Fight North!” Is there any other answer?

Commander’s Hotline

The commander’s hotline is your direct line of communication between me and the Wolf Pack. It’s one of several means of helping to resolve concerns and to get my response to comments and questions. As a general rule, I ask you to contact the agency involved first, but if you are not satisfied, call the hotline at 782-5284, e-mail the 8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs office or e-mail me directly.



Col. Burt Field  
8th Fighter Wing commander

Who to call	
Base exchange.....	782-4520
Chapel.....	782-4300
Civil engineer squadron customer service.....	782-5318
Commissary manager.....	782-4144
Computer help desk.....	782-2666
Fitness center.....	782-4026
Housing office.....	782-4088
Inspector General.....	782-4850
IDEA office.....	782-4020
Law enforcement desk.....	782-4944
Legal assistance.....	782-4283
Military equal opportunity.....	782-4055
Military pay.....	782-5574
Military personnel flight customer service.....	782-5276
Medical patient advocate.....	782-4014



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